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Spotlight on Western Australian farm salinity

Western Australia is the worst affected state in Australia in terms of salinity, with nearly 7,000 farms (51.3% of the state's farms) and 1.2 million hectares of agricultural land showing signs of salinity, according to a special article in **Western Australian Statistical Indicators** (WASI) released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

Results of the 2002 Land Management and Salinity Survey are used in the article, to report on the extent to which salinity has affected land in Western Australia.

Key points from the article include:

- Of the salinity-affected land, 567,377 hectares (45.7%) is unable to be used for production.
- Salinity is more prevalent on non-irrigated farms (60.6%) and on mixed grain beef/sheep farms (86.9%).
- Avon is the worst affected National Action Plan region in the state, with 2,297 farms and 451,044 hectares of land showing signs of salinity, and 63.2% of the salt-affected land unable to be used for production.
- Western Australian farmers led the way in salinity management practices. They have:
 - planted 633,398 hectares of crops, pastures and fodder plants (19.8% of national hectares planted);
 - planted 499,670 hectares of trees (64.4% of national hectares planted);
 - fenced 352,018 hectares of land from grazing (75.5% of national hectares fenced); and
 - constructed 97,900km of earthworks (47.1% of national kilometres constructed).
- A total of 6,453 farmers in Western Australia (73.0% of farmers who are affected by or managing salinity) have changed their land management practices to manage or prevent salinity.

Further information is in **Western Australian Statistical Indicators, June Quarter 2003** (cat. no. 1367.5).

Media Note: In addition to the special article on salinity, WASI also provides:

- Another special article on Population Measures using the Goldfields region of Western Australia as a case study;
- Other statistical information including: state accounts; consumer price index; construction; tourism; labour market; finance; trade; population; and crime statistics. Each issue includes an analysis of recent movements in key state economic and labour market data; and
- A section on Social Trends, which focuses on the issues of population and health in Western Australia.

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